

A new *Heteronotia* (Lacertilia: Gekkonidae) from Western Australia

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Abstract

The new species, *Heteronotia planiceps*, occurs mainly in the Kimberley but has an outlying population in south-eastern Pilbara. It is most like *H. spelea* of the Pilbara, which is redescribed.

Introduction

The endemic Australian gekkonine genus *Heteronotia* was believed to be monotypic before Kluge (1963) separated eight Pilbara specimens as *H. spelea*, mainly on the basis of their weaker dorsal tubercles and bolder, more regular colour pattern. The subsequent collection of 23 more specimens has confirmed the distinctness of *spelea* and permits its redescription. However, the main purpose of this paper is to describe a new species of *Heteronotia*, until recently confused with *spelea*.

This study is based on specimens in the Western Australian Museum. The R prefix has been omitted from their catalogue numbers.

Systematics

Heteronotia planiceps sp. nov.

Figure 1

Holotype

96971 in Western Australian Museum, collected by R.E. Johnstone on 18 June 1987 at 15 km SW Kings Cascade, Western Australia, in 15°43'S, 125°12'E.

Paratypes

The 40 specimens listed under Material.

Diagnosis

A moderately small *Heteronotia* with bold pattern of dark straight-edged transverse nuchal, dorsal and caudal bands, distinguishable from *H. spelea* by temporal stripe in contact with occipital band but not with nuchal band. (When dorsal bands are present in *H. binoei* they are narrow, not straight-edged and about 7 in number).

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 22-49 (N 41, mean 41.0). Length of tail (% SVL): 118-150 (N 14, mean 133.5).

Nostril surrounded by first labial, rostral (median groove incomplete), 2 supranasals (anterior larger) and postnasal. Internasal usually absent (one in 10% of specimens).

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Figure 1 Holotype of *Heteronotia planiceps*, photographed in life by R.E. Johnstone.

Upper labials 7-10 (N 41, mean 8.4), 5-7 (mean 6.4) to centre of eye. Dorsal tubercles moderately large and sharply keeled, in 12-16 longitudinal rows at midbody. Lamellae under fourth toe 11-16 (N 30, mean 13.7), the distal 3-6 (under raised part of digit) much smaller than others. Pre-anal pores occasionally present, 2-4 (N 7, mean 3.7) in continuous chevron-shaped series.

Upper and lateral surfaces pale brown or white, marked with brown, dark brown or black: narrow loreotemporal stripe, which meets narrow straight or slightly curving occipital band at or nearly at right angle; narrow to moderately wide curving band on neck (not in contact with loreotemporal stripe); 4 (rarely 3) usually straight wide bands on body, occasionally broken or disjointed, usually uniformly dark but in paler specimens dark-edged; and 7-13 narrow to wide uniformly dark bands on tail, distal bands encircling tail. Top of head darker than ground colour except for pale inner edge to dark loreotemporal stripe and occipital band. Interspaces on back pale brown and as wide as or slightly narrower than dark bands. Interspaces on tail white and slightly to much narrower than dark bands.

Distribution

Mainly far north of Western Australia, i.e. Kimberley south to the Napier, Oscar, Emanuel and Albert Edward Ranges and including the Buccaneer Archipelago (from Koolan I. west to Caffarelli and Hidden Is). Also known from one locality in south-east Pilbara (Wheellarra Hill, 41 km E Newman). See map, Figure 2.

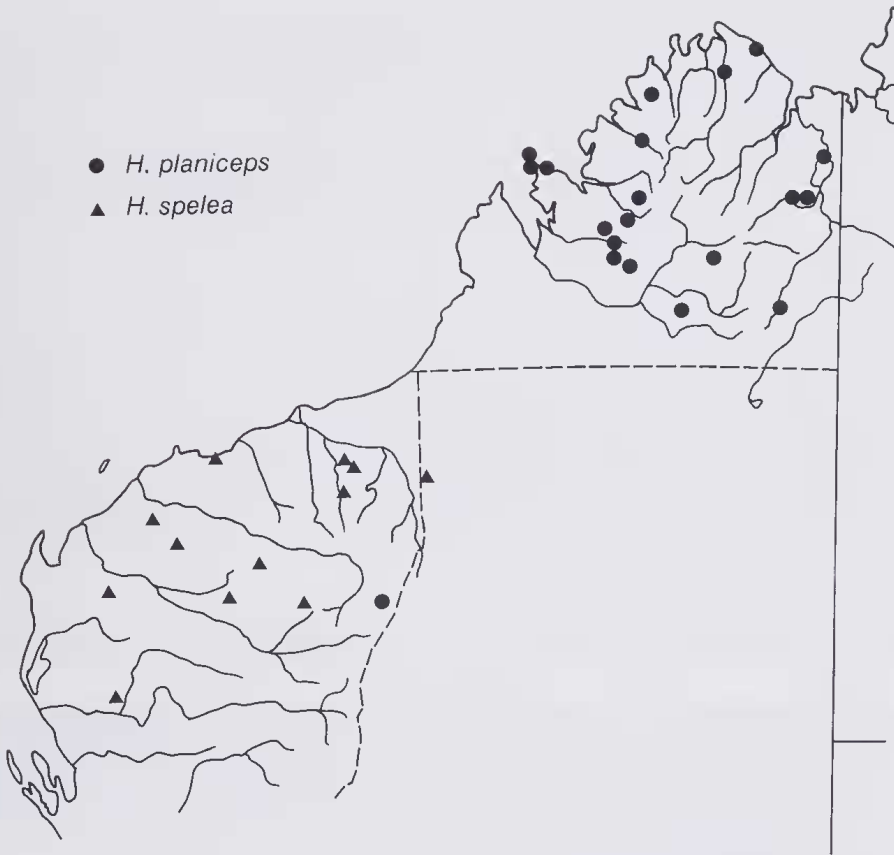


Figure 2 Map of northern Western Australia showing location of specimens of *Heteronotia planiceps* and *H. spelea*.

Derivation of name

From Latin *planus* (flat) and *-ceps* (head).

Material

Kimberley Division (WA)

6 km W Evelyn I. (98039); Drysdale River National Park in 14°40'S, 127°00'E (50777); 2 km E Mitchell River Falls (56355); Camp Creek, Mitchell Plateau (77446); Prince Regent River Reserve (46863, 46892-3, 97962); 15 km SW Kings Cascade (96973); 28 km S Kununurra (70150); Thompson Spring (95390); Caffarelli I. (87954, 87980-1); Bathurst I. (80087, 80095); Irvine I. (80545); Koolan I. (81297); Gibbings I. (80075-7); Hidden I. (80062, 80540); 11 km WSW Lissadell (70450); 16 km NE Bow River HS (75542); 9 km W Beverley Springs (47282); Inglis Gap (57117); 10 km NW Barker Gorge (37012); 9 km SSE Mt Amy (70662); confluence of Barker River and Wombarella Creek (56437); Windjana Gorge (26767) and 3 km SE (53333, 64869); 11 km SSE Mt Percy (70586); 10 km SE Lansdowne (58650); 43 km NW Fitzroy Crossing (70495); Bradley's Mine, 38 km SE Halls Creek (26768); 27 km NW Bohemia Downs (87351-2).

North-west Division (WA)

Wheellarra Hill (97258).

***Heteronotia spelea* (Kluge)**

Heteronota spelea Kluge (1964: 64). Bamboo Creek (20°52'S, 120°10'E), Western Australia.

Diagnosis

A moderately large, long-tailed *Heteronotia* with bold pattern of dark straight-edged transverse nuchal, dorsal and caudal bands, distinguishable from *H. planiceps* by temporal stripe in contact with nuchal band but not with occipital band.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 20-56 (N 31, mean 45.5). Length of tail (%SVL): 134-155 (N 6, mean 146.3).

Nostril surrounded by first labial, rostral (median groove incomplete), 2 supranasals (anterior larger) and postnasal. Internasal usually absent (one in 4% of specimens). Upper labials 8-11 (N 30, mean 9.2), 7-9 (mean 7.7) to centre of eye. Dorsal tubercles relatively small, low and weakly keeled, in 12-18 longitudinal rows at midbody. Lamellae under fourth toe 14-18 (N 22, mean 15.5), distal 5 or 6 smaller than others. Pre-anal pores occasionally present, 4-6 (N 7, mean 4.4) in continuous chevron-shaped series.

Upper and lateral surfaces pale brown or white, marked with brown or dark brown: narrow slightly curving occipital band, not joining temporal stripe, but sometimes



Figure 3 A specimen of *Heteronotia spelea* from near Mt Bruce, photographed by R. E. Johnstone.

curving forwards to form a U; narrow loreotemporal stripe continuous with narrow to moderately wide curving band on nape, the whole forming a dark U; 3 wide dark-edged bands on body and 8 on tail (including basal band even when it slightly encroaches on rump, but excluding dark tail-tip). Top of head usually clouded with brown but leaving a pale U inside dark U on temple and nape. Interspaces on back pale brown, usually a little wider than dark bands. Interspaces on tail white and narrower than dark bands.

Distribution

Mainly the Pilbara plateau south to the southern slopes of the Hamersley Range; also further south in the Kennedy Range. See map, Figure 2.

Material

North-west Division (WA)

40 km S Shay Gap (67451); Whim Creek (14044); Bamboo Creek (12638-40, 12712, 26718, 33413-5, 56846-7); Marble Bar (540); 10-15 km E Warroo Hill (67541); Budjan Creek, Corunna Downs (13250); 10 km SW Pannawonica (68299-302); Silver Grass Peak (19223); Bamboo Springs (40033-5); near Mt Bruce (54475, 69816); 13-15 km WNW Uaroo (80198-9, 81906); 33 km SE Mt Meharry (64828); near Paraburdoo (55983); Kennedy Range (55972).

Reference

Kluge, A.G. (1963). A review of the gekkonid lizard genus *Heteronota* Gray, with a description of a new species from Western Australia. *J. Proc. R. Soc. West. Aust.* **46**: 63-67.